



Weekly Information & Communication



**December 15, 2014**

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## **Spring Conference Save-the-Date**

Our Spring Conference will be held April 7 & 8, 2015 in Helena at the Wingate Hotel. The agenda is still being developed, but we anticipate having a full day on Tuesday the 7th and wrapping up mid-afternoon on Wednesday the 8th. The state rate at the hotel will be available Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday night for those who will need to travel further distances.

You may book your room anytime between now and March 15, 2015 by calling 406-449-3000 or emailing Tiffanie Zavarelli at [Agm@winwingatehelenahotel.com](mailto:Agm@winwingatehelenahotel.com), identify yourself as being with "The Montana WIC Program". The state will reimburse costs for two staff members from each local agency (required attendance); however, we encourage more participation where possible. There will be content and training related specifically to retailer activities, so it is highly encouraged to send your LARC. Stay tuned for more details.

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## **October Benefits Issued & Redeemed Report**

Download the October 2014 Benefits Issued & Redeemed Report [here](#). Remember that we are waiting a full month longer to run the report so it is more reflective of the benefit cashing patterns of WIC retailers.

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## **All 13 Obstetric Facilities Designated Baby-Friendly, from Indian Health Service**

The Indian Health Service has announced that all of its hospitals that provide obstetric services are now designated as Baby-Friendly and offer new mothers the information, confidence, and skills they need to initiate and continue breastfeeding their babies. Congratulations are in order for the Blackfeet Community Hospital in Browning, MT. The IHS Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative is part of First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move! In Indian Country" campaign to fight childhood obesity.

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## **Institute of Medicine (IOM) Review of WIC Food Package**

The IOM is currently in the midst of their review of the WIC food package. It is this same process that resulted in the interim and final food rule implementation over the last several years including such changes as the addition of the fruit and vegetable benefit, the breastfeeding package, changes in milk, etc.

**NOW** is the time to submit any comments you may have about the WIC food package and what changes you would like to see. Follow [this link](#) and click on "Provide Feedback". These comments are considered and included in evaluation, so this is an important part of the process.

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## Certification Policy Tip of the Week

**Question:** What are the timeframes for processing applicants and when does the timeframe start?

**Answer:** When the local agency is not serving its maximum caseload, the local agency shall accept applications, make eligibility determinations, notify the applicants of the decisions made, and if the applicants are to be enrolled, issue food, cash value vouchers or food instruments. Applicants who are at special nutritional risk who require expedited services must be served within 10 days. At a minimum, these categories of persons must include pregnant women eligible as Priority I and migrant farm workers who will soon leave the area. All other applicants must be notified of their eligibility or ineligibility within 20 days of their request for benefits. (Reference 246.7(f)(2)(ii)) Montana requires the timeframe to start when the applicant first requests services via phone or in person.



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